

Part one of Cowbridge church restoration almost complete ...THEN ON TO THE NEXT STAGE!

by JAYNE ISAAC

THE first phase of the restoration of Holy Cross Church in Cowbridge is on course to be completed by October.

The work, which got under way in April, is concentrated on the tower and the chancel end of the church.

Church warden Pamela Roberts, who is the vice-chairman of the restoration committee, said that the tower had been leaking like a sieve and water damage has been caused to stonework and the interior plaster-work.

"We are tackling the restoration of the church in bite-size chunks. The first phase is costing about £200,000 and we had to raise our share before work could commence.

"We have been given a grant of up to £85,000 by Cadw and a further £70,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, leaving us to find the balance," she explained.

The tower was deemed to be that part of the church in most urgent need of repair.

Holy Cross dates from the 13th century, but has later additions. Restoration work was carried out by the Victorians and most recently in the 1920s.

As a condition of the grant, Cadw has stipulated that the tower must be lime-washed to prevent damp and water penetration.

It was lime-washed in the 13th century and you can still see traces of lime-wash on some of the stones. We are putting it back to how it would have looked," Mrs Roberts explained.

Once the exterior work is completed, the builders will start work inside and that end of the church will be screened off, with the altar moved forward so that services can continue while work is underway.

"This area has been badly damaged by water penetration and damp. We will be taking out some rows of pews to enable things to move forward. They will be put back when work is completed," she said.

Once this work is completed, the church will then go back to square one in a bid to get funds to carry out phase two of the restoration.

This entails dealing with the exterior of the rest of the building and once again, this will have to lime-washed if Cadw grants are to be available.

"We will have to start applying for funds all over again and the process will take all of next year. We expect the next phase to cost about £250,000, but we will need a proper survey and estimates.

"Work is unlikely to start before April 2010 – and that's assuming all the finance is in place."

The last phase, and the most expensive, entails a re-organisation of the interior of the church.

Mrs Roberts went on: "There's no guarantee that we will reach this phase, but it is the culmination of our vision of the way forward to make Holy Cross a community building."

Members want to remove the pews from part of the church to create a multi-use floor area suitable for concerts, exhibitions and other artistic and cultural activities.

A mezzanine floor would be installed, suspended over the church to create meeting rooms, offices and a base for the Sunday school.

The scheme also includes providing a proper kitchen and toilets. In all, this phase could cost £1.5m.

"It's a scary sum and we have not even began thinking about it yet. We must get the first two phases under our belt and then tackle this final phase," she added.

Rev Canon Derek Belcher, Rector of Cowbridge,

shares this vision of the future.

"We put forward our plans and people responded. No one objected. I want the church to be open to the whole community in a totally welcoming way. In its history, the church has been a place of sanctuary, safety and welcome.

It would become a venue for lots of community activities and be a place for all the people of Cowbridge."

Fundraising goes on apace, with the next event being an auction of promises on September 19 at Aberthin Village Hall starting at 7.30pm. So far, 30 promises have been pledged. Tickets are £5, including a light buffet supper. They are available from the parish office or any member of the committee.

Places are limited to 70, so it will be first come, first served.



40 years – and counting, at Horticultural S

FOR 40 years, the villagers of Wick and surrounding areas have come together at the beginning of September to see who, despite variable weather conditions, can grow the best vegetables, fruit and flowers.

The flower arrangers, cooks and children also have a chance to show their best efforts in the 87 classes of Wick Horticultural Show.

In the 40 years, little has changed in the vegetable exhibits on offer, except the variety and the addition of more exotic types of vegetables and fruit.

Entries in the fruit classes include the usual apples and pears but have become more exotic with grapes, kiwi fruit and melons, plus soft fruits.

The floral classes are greatly depend-

ent on weather of the floral to improve.

The children ported with suburban on a tray' of tification of leav

There are awarded for the tion, with a cash section.

So come to Saturday, Septe brate our ruby a

It is a good 9am and an in the public from children free.

Enquiries fr 890320.